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Essays
on
The Intellectual Powers,
Moral Sentiments,
Happiness,
and
National Felicity.
By Adam Ferguson.



P A R I S.

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OF INTELLECTUAL POWERS.

MANY attempts have been made to analyse those dispositions on which are founded the principles of self-preservation, of union and dissention; but one purpose of science, perhaps the most important, is served when the existence of a disposition is established. We are more concerned in its reality, and in its consequences, than we are in its origin, or manner of formation.

The same observation may be applied to the other powers and faculties of our nature. Their existence and use are the principal objects of our study. Thinking and reasoning, we say, are the operations of some faculty; but in what manner the faculties of thought or reason remain when they are not exerted, or by what difference in the frame they are unequal in different persons, are questions which we cannot resolve. Their operations alone discover them: when unapplied, they lie hidden even from the person to whom they pertain, and their action is so much a part of their nature, that the faculty itself, in many cases, is scarcely to be distinguished from a habit acquired in its frequent exertion.

Persons who are occupied with different subjects, who act in different scenes, generally appear to have different talents, or at least to have the same faculties variously formed, and suited to different purposes. The peculiar genius of nations, as well as of individuals, may in this manner arise from the

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state of their fortunes. And it is proper that we endeavour to find some rule by which to judge of what is admirable in the capacities of men, or fortunate in the application of their faculties, before we venture to pass a judgment on this branch of their merits, or pretend to measure the degree of respect they may claim by their different attainments.

To receive the informations of sense is perhaps the earliest function of an animal combined with an intellectual nature, and one great accomplishment of the living agent consists in the force and sensibility of his animal organs. The pleasures or pains to which he is exposed from this quarter constitute to him an important difference between the objects which are thus brought to his knowledge, and it concerns him to distinguish well before he commit himself to the direction of appetite. He must scrutinize the objects of one sense by the perceptions of another; examine with the eye before he venture to touch; and employ every mean of observation before he gratify the appetites of thirst and of hunger. A discernment acquired by experience becomes a faculty of his mind, and the inferences of thought are sometimes not to be distinguished from the perceptions of sense.

The objects around us, beside their separate appearances, have their relations to each other. They suggest, when compared, what would not occur when they are considered apart; they have their effects, and mutual influences; they exhibit, in like circumstances, similar operations and

uniform consequences. When we have found and expressed the points in which the uniformity of their operations consists, we have ascertained a physical law. Many such laws, and even the most important, are known to the vulgar, and occur upon the smallest degrees of reflection; but others are hidden under a seeming confusion which ordinary talents cannot remove, and are therefore the objects of study, long observation, and superior capacity. The faculties of penetration and judgment are, by men of business as well as of science, employed to unravel intricacies of this sort; and the degree of sagacity with which either is endowed is to be measured by the success with which they are able to find general rules, applicable to a variety of cases that seemed to have nothing in common, and to discover important distinctions between subjects which the vulgar are apt to confound.

To collect a multiplicity of particulars under general heads, and to refer a variety of operations to their common principle, is the object of science. To do the same thing, at least within the range of his active engagements, is requisite to the man of pleasure, or business: and it would seem that the studious and the active are so far employed in the same task, from observation and experience, to find the general views under which their objects may be considered, and the rules which may be usefully applied in the detail of their conduct. They do not always apply their talents to different subjects; and they seem to

be distinguished chiefly by the unequal reach and variety of their remarks, or by the intentions which they severally have in collecting them.

Whilst men continue to act from appetites and passions, leading to the attainment of external ends, they seldom quit the view of their objects in detail to go far in the road of general inquiries. They measure the extent of their own abilities by the promptitude with which they apprehend what is important in every subject, and the facility with which they extricate themselves on every trying occasion. And these, it must be confessed, to a being who is destined to act in the midst of difficulties, are the proper test of capacity and force. The parade of words and general reasonings, which sometimes carry an appearance of so much learning and knowledge, are of little avail in the conduct of life. The talents from which they proceed terminate in mere ostentation, and are seldom connected with that superior discernment which the active apply in times of perplexity; much less with that intrepidity and force of mind which are required in passing through difficult scenes.

The abilities of active men, however, have a variety corresponding to that of the subjects on which they are occupied. A sagacity applied to external and inanimate nature forms one species of capacity; that which is turned to society and human affairs, another. Reputation for parts in any scene is equivocal, till we know by what kind of exertion that reputation is gained. No

more can be said in commending men of the greatest abilities than that they understand well the subjects to which they have applied; and every department, every profession, would have its great men, if there were not a choice of objects for the understanding, and of talents for the mind, as well as of sentiments for the heart and of habits for the active character.

The meanest professions, indeed, so far sometimes forget themselves, or the rest of mankind, as to arrogate, in commending what is distinguished in their own way, every epithet the most respectable claim as the right of superior abilities. Every mechanic is a great man with the learner and the humble admirer in his particular calling; and we can, perhaps, with more assurance pronounce what it is that should make a man happy and amiable than what should make his abilities respected, and his genius admired. This, upon a view of the talents themselves, may perhaps be impossible. The effect, however, will point out the rule and the standard of our judgment. To be admired and respected is to have an ascendant among men. The talents which most directly procure that ascendant are those which operate on mankind, penetrate their views, prevent their wishes, or frustrate their designs. The superior capacity leads with a superior energy where every individual would go, and shews the hesitating and irresolute a clear passage to the attainment of their ends.

This description does not pertain to any particular.

craft or profession; or perhaps it implies a kind of ability which the separate application of men to particular callings only tends to suppress or to weaken. Where shall we find the talents which are fit to act with men in a collective body, if we break that body into parts, and confine the observation of each to a separate track?

To act in the view of his fellow-creatures, to produce his mind in public, to give it all the exercise of sentiment and thought, which pertain to man as a member of society, as a friend, or an enemy, seems to be the principal calling and occupation of his nature. If he must labour, that he may subsist, he can subsist for no better purpose than the good of mankind; nor can he have better talents than those which qualify him to act with men. Here, indeed, the understanding appears to borrow very much from the passions; and there is a felicity of conduct in human affairs in which it is difficult to distinguish the promptitude of the head from the ardour and sensibility of the heart. Where both are united, they constitute that superiority of mind, the frequency of which among men, in particular ages and nations, much more than the progress they have made in speculation, or in the practice of mechanic and liberal arts, should determine the rate of their genius, and assign the palm of distinction and honour.

When nations succeed one another in the career of discoveries and inquiries, the last is always the most knowing. Systems of science are gradually formed. The globe itself is traversed by degrees,

and the history of every age, when past, is an accession of knowledge to those who succeed. The Romans were more knowing than the Greeks, and every scholar of modern Europe is, in this sense, more learned than the most accomplished person that ever bore either of those celebrated names. But is he on that account their superior?

Men are to be estimated, not from what they know, but from what they are able to perform; from their skill in adapting materials to the several purposes of life; from their vigour and conduct in pursuing the objects of policy, and in finding the expedients of war and national defence. Even in literature they are to be estimated from the works of their genius, not from the extent of their knowledge. The scene of mere observation was extremely limited in a Grecian republic, and the bustle of an active life appeared inconsistent with study: but there the human mind, notwithstanding, collected its greatest abilities, and received its best informations in the midst of sweat and of dust.

It is peculiar to modern Europe to rest so much of the human character on what may be learned in retirement, and from the information of books. A just admiration of ancient literature, an opinion that human sentiment and human reason, without this aid, were to have vanished from the societies of men, have led us into the shade, where we endeavour to derive from imagination and study what is in reality matter of experience and sentiment; and we endeavour, through the grammar of dead languages, and the channel of commentators,

to arrive at the beauties of thought and elocution, which sprang from the animated spirit of society, and were taken from the living impressions of an active life. Our attainments are frequently limited to the elements of every science, and seldom reach to that enlargement of ability and power which useful knowledge should give. Like mathematicians who study the Elements of Euclid but never think of mensuration, we read of societies, but do not propose to act with men : we repeat the language of politics, but feel not the spirit of nations : we attend to the formalities of a military discipline, but know not how to employ numbers of men to obtain any purpose by stratagem or force.

But for what end, it may be said, point out an evil that cannot be remedied ! If national affairs called for exertion the genius of men would awake ; but in the recess of better employment the time which is bestowed on study, if even attended with no other advantage, serves to occupy with innocence the hours of leisure, and set bounds to the pursuit of ruinous and frivolous amusements. From no better reason than this we employ so many of our early years, under the rod, to acquire what it is not expected we should retain beyond the threshold of the school ; and whilst we carry the same frivolous character in our studies that we do in our amusements, the human mind could not suffer more from a contempt of letters than it does from the false importance which is given to literature, as a business for life, not as a help to our conduct, and the means of forming a

character that may be happy in itself, and useful to mankind.

If that time which is passed in relaxing the powers of the mind, and in withholding every object but what tends to weaken and to corrupt, were employed in fortifying those powers, and in teaching the mind to recognise its objects and its strength, we should not, at the years of maturity, be so much at a loss for occupation; nor, in attending the chances of a gaming-table, misemploy our talents, or waste the fire which remains in the breast. They, at least, who by their stations have a share in the government of their country, might believe themselves capable of business; and, while the state had its armies and councils, might find objects enough to amuse, without throwing a personal fortune into hazard, merely to cure the yawnings of a listless and insignificant life. It is impossible for ever to maintain the tone of speculation; it is impossible not sometimes to feel that we live among men.

OF MORAL SENTIMENT.

UPON a slight observation of what passes in human life, we should be apt to conclude that the care of subsistence is the principal spring of human actions. This consideration leads to the invention and practice of mechanical arts; it serves to distinguish amusement from business; and, with many, scarcely admits into competition any other

subject of pursuit or attention. The mighty advantages of property and fortune, when stript of the recommendations they derive from vanity, or the more serious regards to independence and power, only mean a provision that is made for animal enjoyment; and if our solicitude on this subject were removed, not only the toils of the mechanic, but the studies of the learned, would cease; every department of public business would become unnecessary; every senate-house would be shut up, and every palace deserted.

Is man therefore, in respect to his object, to be classed with the mere brutes, and only to be distinguished by faculties that qualify him to multiply contrivances for the support and convenience of animal life, and by the extent of a fancy that renders the care of animal preservation to him more burthensome than it is to the herd with which he shares in the bounty of nature? If this were his case, the joy which attends on success, or the griefs which arise from disappointment, would make the sum of his passions. The torrent that wasted, or the inundation that enriched, his possessions, would give him all the emotion with which he is seized, on the occasion of a wrong by which his fortunes are impaired, or of a benefit by which they are preserved and enlarged. His fellow-creatures would be considered merely as they affected his interest. Profit or loss would serve to mark the event of every transaction; and the epithets *useful* or *detrimental* would serve to distinguish his mates in society, as they do the tree which bears plenty

of fruit, from that which only cumpers the ground, or intercepts his view.

This, however, is not the history of our species. What comes from a fellow-creature is received with peculiar emotion; and every language abounds with terms that express somewhat in the transactions of men, different from success and disappointment. The bosom kindles in company, while the point of interest in view has nothing to inflame; and a matter, frivolous in itself, becomes important when it serves to bring to light the intentions and characters of men. The foreigner who believed that Othello, on the stage, was enraged for the loss of his handkerchief, was not more mistaken than the reasoner who imputes any of the more vehement passions of men to the impressions of mere profit or loss.

Men assemble to deliberate on business; they separate from jealousies of interest; but in their several collisions, whether as friends or as enemies, a fire is struck out which the regards to interest or safety cannot confine. The value of a favour is not measured when sentiments of kindness are perceived; and the term *misfortune* has but a feeble meaning when compared to that of *insult* and *wrong*.

As actors or spectators we are perpetually made to feel the difference of human conduct, and, from a bare recital of transactions which have passed in ages and countries remote from our own, are moved with admiration and pity, or transported with indignation and rage. Our sensibility on

this subject gives their charm, in retirement, to the relations of history and to fictions of poetry; sends forth the tear of compassion; gives to the blood its briskest movement, and to the eye its liveliest glances of displeasure or joy : it turns human life into an interesting spectacle, and perpetually solicits even the indolent to mix, as opponents or friends, in the scenes which are acted before them. Joined to the powers of deliberation and reason, it constitutes the basis of a moral nature; and whilst it dictates the terms of praise and of blame, serves to class our fellow-creatures, by the most admirable and engaging, or the most odious and contemptible denominations.

It is pleasant to find men, who in their speculations deny the reality of moral distinctions, forget in detail the general positions they maintain, and give loose to ridicule, indignation, and scorn, as if any of these sentiments could have place were the actions of men indifferent ; or with acrimony pretend to detect the fraud by which moral restraints have been imposed, as if to censure a fraud were not already to take a part on the side of morality[†].

It is fortunate in this, as in other articles to which speculation and theory are applied, that nature proceeds in her course whilst the curious are busied in the search of her principles. The peasant, or the child, can reason and judge, and speak his language with a discernment, a consistency,

[†] Mandeville.

and a regard to analogy which perplex the logician, the moralist, and the grammarian, when they would find the principle upon which the proceeding is founded, or when they would bring to general rule what is so familiar, and so well sustained in particular cases. The felicity of our conduct is more owing to the talent we possess for detail, and to the suggestion of particular occasions, than it is to any direction we can find in theory and general speculations.

We must, in the result of every inquiry, encounter with facts which we cannot explain; and to bear with this mortification would save us frequently a great deal of fruitless trouble. Together with the sense of our existence, we must admit many circumstances which come to our knowledge at the same time, and in the same manner, and which do, in reality, constitute the mode of our being. Every peasant will tell us that a man hath his rights; and that to trespass on those rights is injustice. If we ask him farther what he means by the term *right*? we probably force him to substitute a less significant, or less proper term, in the place of this; or require him to account for what is an original mode of his mind, and a sentiment to which he ultimately refers when he would explain himself upon any particular application of his language.

The rights of individuals may relate to a variety of subjects, and be comprehended under different heads. Prior to the establishment of property, and the distinction of ranks, men have a right to

defend their persons, and to act with freedom ; they have a right to maintain the apprehensions of reason, and the feelings of the heart ; and they cannot for a moment associate together without feeling that the treatment they give or receive may be just or unjust. It is not, however, our business here to carry the notion of a right into its several applications, but to reason on the sentiment of favour with which that notion is entertained in the mind.

If it be true that men are united by instinct, that they act in society from affections of kindness and friendship ; if it be true that even prior to acquaintance and habitude, men, as such, are commonly to each other objects of attention, and some degree of regard ; that, while their prosperity is beheld with indifference, their afflictions are considered with commiseration ; if calamities be measured by the numbers and the qualities of men they involve, and if every suffering of a fellow-creature draws a crowd of attentive spectators ; if, even in the case of those to whom we do not habitually wish any positive good, we are still averse to be the instruments of harm, it should seem that in these various appearances of an amicable disposition, the foundations of a moral apprehension are sufficiently laid, and the sense of a right, which we maintain for ourselves, is by a movement of humanity and candour extended to our fellow-creatures.

What is it that prompts the tongue when we censure an act of cruelty or oppression ? What is

it that constitutes our restraint from offences that tend to distress our fellow-creatures! It is probably, in both cases, a particular application of that principle, which, in presence of the sorrowful, sends forth the tear of compassion; and a combination of all those sentiments which constitute a benevolent disposition; and if not a resolution to do good, at least an aversion to be the instrument of harm.

It may be difficult, however, to enumerate the motives of all the censures and commendations which are applied to the actions of men. Even while we moralize, every disposition of the human mind may have its share in forming the judgment, and in prompting the tongue. As jealousy is often the most watchful guardian of chastity, so malice is often the quickest to spy the failings of our neighbour. Envy, affectation and vanity may dictate the verdicts we give, and the worst principles of our nature may be at the bottom of our pretended zeal for morality; but if we only mean to inquire why they who are well disposed to mankind apprehend, in every instance, certain rights pertaining to their fellow-creatures, and why they applaud the consideration that is paid to those rights, we cannot assign a better reason than that the person who applauds is well disposed to the welfare of the parties to whom his applauses refer. Applause, however, is the expression of a peculiar sentiment; an expression of esteem, the reverse of contempt. Its object is perfection, the reverse of defect. This sentiment is not the love of mankind, it is that by

which we estimate the qualities of men, and the objects of our pursuit; that which doubles the force of every desire or aversion when we consider its object as tending to raise or to sink our nature.

When we consider that the reality of any amicable propensity in the human mind has been frequently contested; when we recollect the prevalence of interested competitions, with their attendant passions of jealousy, envy, and malice, it may seem strange to allege that love and compassion are, next to the desire of elevation, the most powerful motives in the human breast; that they urge, on many occasions, with the most irresistible vehemence: and if the desire of self-preservation be more constant, and more uniform, these are a more plentiful source of enthusiasm, satisfaction, and joy. With a power not inferior to that of resentment and rage they hurry the mind into every sacrifice of interest, and bear it undismayed through every hardship and danger.

The disposition on which friendship is grafted glows with satisfaction in the hours of tranquillity, and is pleasant, not only in its triumphs, but even in its sorrows. It throws a grace on the external air, and, by its expression on the countenance, compensates for the want of beauty, or gives a charm which no complexion or features can equal. From this source the scenes of human life derive their principal felicity, and their imitations in poetry, their principal ornament. Descriptions of nature, even representations of a vigorous conduct, and a manly courage, do not engage the

heart, if they be not mixed with the exhibition of generous sentiments, and the pathetic which is found to arise in the struggles, the triumphs, or the misfortunes of a tender affection. The death of Polites, in the *Æneid*, is not more affecting than that of many others who perished in the ruins of Troy; but the aged Priam was present when this last of his sons was slain; and the agonies of grief and sorrow force the parent from his retreat to fall by the hand that shed the blood of his child. The pathetic of Homer consists in exhibiting the force of affections, not in exciting mere terror and pity; passions he has never perhaps, in any instance, attempted to raise.

With this tendency to kindle into enthusiasm, with this command over the heart, with the pleasure that attends its emotions, and with all its effects in meriting confidence and procuring esteem, it is not surprising that a principle of humanity should give the tone to our commendations and our censures, and, even where it is hindered from directing our conduct, should still give to the mind, on reflection, its knowledge of what is desirable in the human character. *What hast thou done with thy brother Abel?* was the first expostulation in behalf of morality; and if the first answer has been often repeated, mankind have notwithstanding, in one sense, sufficiently acknowledged the charge of their nature. They have felt, they have talked, and even acted, as the keepers of their fellow-creatures: they have made the indications of candour and mutual affection the test of what is meritorious and

amiable in the characters of men : they have made cruelty and oppression the principal objects of their indignation and rage : even while the head is occupied with projects of interest, the heart is often seduced into friendship ; and while business proceeds on the maxims of self - preservation, the careless hour is employed in generosity and kindness.

Hence the rule by which men commonly judge of external actions is taken from the supposed influence of such actions on the general good. To abstain from harm is the great law of natural justice ; to diffuse happiness is the law of morality ; and when we censure the conferring of a favour on one or a few at the expence of many, we refer to public utility as the great object at which the actions of men should be aimed.

After all, it must be confessed that, if a principle of affection to mankind be the basis of our moral approbation and dislike, we sometimes proceed in distributing applause or censure without precisely attending to the degree in which our fellow-creatures are hurt or obliged ; and that, beside the virtues of candour, friendship, generosity, and public spirit which bear an immediate reference to this principle, there are others which may seem to derive their commendation from a different source. Temperance, prudence, fortitude, are those qualities likewise admired from a principle of regard to our fellow-creatures ? Why not, since they render men happy in themselves, and useful to others ? He, who is qualified to

promote the welfare of mankind, is neither a sot, a fool, nor a coward. Can it be more clearly expressed, that temperance, prudence, and fortitude, are necessary to the character we love and admire? I know well why I should wish for them in myself; and why likewise I should wish for them in my friend, and in every person who is an object of my affection. But to what purpose seek for reasons of approbation where qualities are so necessary to our happiness, and so great a part in the perfection of our nature? We must cease to esteem ourselves, and to distinguish what is excellent, when such qualifications incur our neglect.

A person of an affectionate mind, possessed of a maxim that he himself, as an individual, is no more than a part of the whole that demands his regard, has found, in that principle, a sufficient foundation for all the virtues; for a contempt of animal pleasures that would supplant his principal enjoyment; for an equal contempt of danger or pain that comes to stop his pursuits of public good. “A vehement and steady affection magnifies its object, and lessens every difficulty or danger that stands in the way.” “Ask those who have been in love,” says Epictetus, “they will know that I speak truth.”

“I have before me,” says another eminent moralist¹, “an idea of justice, which if I could follow in every instance, I should think myself the most happy of men.” And it is of consequence to

¹ Persian Letters.

their happiness, as well as to their conduct, if those can be disjoined, that men should have this idea properly formed : it is perhaps but another name for that good of mankind which the virtuous are engaged to promote. If virtue be the supreme good, its best and most signal effect is to communicate and diffuse itself.

To distinguish men by the difference of their moral qualities, to espouse one party from a sense of justice, to oppose another even with indignation when excited by iniquity, are the common indications of probity, and the operations of an animated, upright, and generous spirit. To guard against unjust partialities, and ill-grounded antipathies, to maintain that composure of mind which, without impairing its sensibility or ardour, proceeds in every instance with discernment and penetration, are the marks of a vigorous and cultivated spirit. To be able to follow the dictates of such a spirit through all the varieties of human life, and with a mind always master of itself in prosperity or adversity, and possessed of all its abilities, when the subjects in hazard are life, or freedom, as much as in treating simple questions of interest, are the triumphs of magnanimity, and true elevation of mind. “ The event of the day is decided. Draw “ this javelin from my body now,” said Epaminondas, “ and let me bleed.”

In what situation, or by what instruction, is this wonderful character to be formed? Is it found in the nurseries of affectation, pertness, and vanity from which fashion is propagated, and the genteel

is announced! in great and opulent cities, where men vie with each other in equipage, dress, and the reputation of fortune! Is it within the admired precincts of a court where we may learn to smile without being pleased, to caress without affection, to wound with the secret weapons of envy and jealousy, and to rest our personal importance on circumstances which we cannot always with honour command! No: but in a situation where the great sentiments of the heart are awakened; where the characters of men, not their situations and fortunes, are the principal distinction; where the anxieties of interest or vanity perish in the blaze of more vigorous emotions; and where the human soul, having felt and recognised its objects, like an animal who has tasted the blood of his prey, cannot descend to pursuits that leave its talents and its force unemployed.

Proper occasions alone, operating on a raised and a happy disposition, may produce this admirable effect, whilst mere instruction may always find mankind at a loss to comprehend its meaning or insensible to its dictates. The case, however, is not desperate till we have formed our system of politics as well as manners; till we have sold our freedom for titles, equipage, and distinctions; till we see no merit but prosperity and power, no disgrace but poverty and neglect. What charm of instruction can cure the mind that is tainted with this disorder! What syren-voice can awaken a desire of freedom that is held to be meanness, and a want of ambition!

or what persuasion can turn the grimace of politeness into real sentiments of humanity and candour ?

OF HAPPINESS.

HAVING had under our consideration the active powers and the moral qualities which distinguish the nature of man, is it still necessary that we should treat of his happiness apart ? This significant term, the most frequent and the most familiar in our conversation, is perhaps, on reflection, the least understood. It serves to express our satisfaction when any desire is gratified : it is pronounced with a sigh when our object is distant : it means what we wish to obtain, and what we seldom stay to examine. We estimate the value of every subject by its utility, and its influence on happiness ; but we think that utility itself, and happiness, require no explanation.

Those men are commonly esteemed the happiest whose desires are most frequently gratified. But if, in reality, the possession of what they desire and a continued fruition were requisite to happiness, mankind for the most part would have reason to complain of their lot. What they call their enjoyments are generally momentary ; and the object of sanguine expectation, when obtained, no longer continues to occupy the mind : a new passion succeeds, and the imagination, as before, is intent on a distant felicity.

How many reflections of this sort are suggested by melancholy, or by the effects of that very languor and inoccupation into which we would willingly sink under the notion of freedom from care and trouble !

When we enter on a formal computation of the enjoyments or sufferings which are prepared for mankind, it is a chance but we find that pain, by its intenseness, its duration, or frequency, is greatly predominant. The activity and eagerness with which we press from one stage of life to another, our unwillingness to return on the paths we have trodden, our aversion in age to renew the frolics of youth, or to repeat in manhood the amusements of children, have been accordingly stated as proofs that our memory of the past and our feeling of the present are equal subjects of dislike and displeasure. *

This conclusion, however, like many others drawn from our supposed knowledge of causes, does not correspond with experience. In every street, in every village, in every field, the greater number of persons we meet carry an aspect that is cheerful or thoughtless, indifferent, composed, busy or animated. The labourer whistles to his team, and the mechanic is at ease in his calling ; the frolicsome and gay feel a series of pleasures of which we know not the source ; even they who demonstrate the miseries of human life, when intent on their argument, escape from their sorrows, and find a

* Maupertuis, *Essais de morale*.

tolerable pastime in proving that men are unhappy.

The very terms *pleasure* and *pain*, perhaps, are equivocal; but if they are confined, as they appear to be in many of our reasonings, to the mere sensations which have a reference to external objects, either in the memory of the past, the feeling of the present, or the apprehension of the future, it is a great error to suppose that they comprehend all the constituents of happiness or misery; or that the good humour of an ordinary life is maintained by the prevalence of those pleasures which have their separate names, and are, on reflection, distinctly remembered.

If, in the absence of every sensation to which we commonly give the names either of *enjoyment* or *suffering*, our very existence may have its opposite qualities of *happiness* or *misery*; and if what we call *pleasure* or *pain* occupies but a small part of human life compared to what passes in contrivance and execution, in pursuits and expectations, in conduct, reflection, and social engagements, it must appear that our active pursuits, at least on account of their duration, deserve the greater part of our attention. When their occasions have failed, the demand is not for pleasure, but for something to do; and the very complaints of a sufferer are not so sure a mark of distress as the stare of the languid.

We seldom, however, reckon any task which we are bound to perform among the blessings of life. We always aim at a period of pure enjoyment or a termination of trouble, and overlook

the source from which most of our present satisfactions are really drawn. Ask the busy, where is the happiness to which they aspire? they will answer, perhaps, that it is to be found in the object of some present pursuit. If we ask, why they are not miserable in the absence of that happiness? they will say that they hope to attain it. But is it hope alone that supports the mind in the midst of precarious and uncertain prospects? and would assurance of success fill the intervals of expectation with more pleasing emotions?—Give the huntsman his prey, give the gamester the gold that is staked on the game, that the one may not need to fatigue his person, nor the other to perplex his mind, and both will probably laugh at your folly the one will stake his money anew that he may be perplexed; the other will turn his stag to the field that he may hear the cry of the dogs, and follow through danger and hardship. Withdraw the occupations of men, terminate their desires, existence is a burden, and the iteration of memory is a torment.

The difficulties and hardships of human life are supposed to detract from the goodness of God; yet many of the pastimes men devise for themselves are fraught with difficulty and danger. The great inventor of the game of human life knew well how to accommodate the players. The chances are matter of complaint: but if these were removed, the game itself would no longer amuse the parties. In devising or in executing a plan, in being carried on the tide of emotion and sentiment, the mind

seems to unfold its being, and to enjoy itself. Even where the end and the object are known to be of little avail, the talents and the fancy are often intensely applied, and business or play may amuse them alike. We only desire repose to recruit our limited and our wasting force: when business fatigues, amusement is often but a change of occupation. We are not always unhappy even when we complain. There is a kind of affliction which makes an agreeable state of the mind, and lamentation itself is sometimes an expression of pleasure. The painter and the poet have laid hold of this handle, and find among the means of entertainment a favourable reception for works that are composed to awaken our sorrows.

To a being of this description, therefore, it is a blessing to meet with incentives to action, whether in the desire of pleasure, or the aversion to pain. His activity is of more importance than the very pleasure he seeks, and languor, a greater evil than the suffering he shuns.

The gratifications of animal appetite are of short duration, and sensuality is but a distemper of the mind which ought to be cured by remembrance, if it were not perpetually inflamed by hope. The chase is not more surely terminated by the death of the game than the joys of the voluptuary by the means of completing his debauch. As a bond of society, as a matter of distant pursuit, the objects of sense make an important part in the system of human life. They lead us to fulfil the purposes of nature in preserving the individual, and in

perpetuating the species; but to rely on their use as a principal constituent of happiness were an error in speculation, and would be still more an error in practice. Even the master of the Seraglio, for whom all the treasures of the empire are extorted from the hoards of its frightened inhabitants, for whom alone the choicest emerald and the diamond are drawn from the mine, for whom every breeze is enriched with perfumes, for whom beauty is assembled from every quarter, and animated by passions that ripen under the vertical sun is confined to the grate for his use, is still, perhaps, more wretched than the very herd of the people whose labours and properties are devoted to relieve him of trouble and to procure him enjoyment.

Sensuality is easily overcome by any of the habits of pursuit which usually engage an active mind. When curiosity is awake, or when passion is excited, even in the midst of the feast when conversation grows warm, grows jovial, or serious, the pleasures of the table we know are forgotten. The boy contemns them for play, and the man of age declines them for business.

When we reckon the circumstances that correspond to the nature of any animal, or to that of man in particular, such as safety, shelter, food, and the other means of enjoyment or preservation, we sometimes think that we have found a sensible and a solid foundation on which to rest his felicity: but those, who are least disposed to moralize, observe that happiness is not connected with fortune, although fortune includes at once all the

means of subsistence and the means of sensual indulgence. The circumstances that require abstinence, courage, and conduct, expose us to hazard, and are in description of the painful kind; yet the able, the brave, and the ardent, seem most to enjoy themselves when placed in the midst of difficulties, and obliged to employ the powers they possess.

Spinola, being told that Sir Francis Vere died of having nothing to do, said, "That was enough "to kill a general". How many are there to whom war itself is a pastime, who choose the life of a soldier, exposed to dangers and continued fatigues; of a mariner, in conflict with every hardship, and bereft of every conveniency; of a politician, whose sport is the conduct of parties and factions, and who, rather than be idle, will do the business of men and of nations for whom he has not the smallest regard! Such men do not choose pain as preferable to pleasure, but they are incited by a restless disposition to make continued exertions of capacity and resolution; they triumph in the midst of their struggles; they droop and they languish when the occasion of their labour has ceased.

What was enjoyment in the sense of that youth who, according to Tacitus, loved danger itself, not the rewards of courage! What is the prospect of pleasure when the sound of the horn or the trumpet, the cry of the dogs, or the shout of war, awaken

* Life of Lord Herbert.

the ardour of the sportsman and the soldier! The most animating occasions of human life are calls to danger and hardship, not invitations to safety and ease; and man himself, in his excellence, is not an animal of pleasure, nor destined merely to enjoy what the elements bring to his use, but, like his associates the dog and the horse, to follow the exercises of his nature in preference to what are called its enjoyments; to pine in the lap of ease and of affluence, and to exult in the midst of alarms that seem to threaten his being, in all which his disposition to action only keeps pace with the variety of powers with which he is furnished; and the most respectable attributes of his nature, magnanimity, fortitude, and wisdom, carry a manifest reference to the difficulties with which he is destined to struggle.

If animal pleasure becomes insipid when the spirit is roused by a different object, it is well known likewise that the sense of pain is prevented by any vehement affection of the soul. Wounds received in a heat of passion, in the hurry, the ardour, or consternation of battle, are never felt till the ferment of the mind subsides. Even torments deliberately applied and industriously prolonged are borne with firmness, and with an appearance of ease when the mind is possessed with some vigorous sentiment, whether of religion, enthusiasm, or love to mankind. The continued mortifications of superstitious devotees in several ages of the Christian church, the wild penances still voluntarily borne during many years by the

religionists of the East, the contempt in which famine and torture are held by most savage nations, the cheerful or obstinate patience of the soldier in the field, the hardships endured by the sportsman in his pastime, show how much we may err in computing the miseries of men from the measures of trouble and of suffering they seem to incur. And if there be a refinement in affirming that their happiness is not to be measured by the contrary enjoyments, it is a refinement which was made by Regulus and Cincinnatus before the date of philosophy. Fabricius knew it while he had heard arguments only on the opposite side¹: it is a refinement which every boy knows at his play, and every savage confirms when he looks from his forest on the pacific city, and scorns the plantation whose master he cares not to imitate.

Man, it must be confessed, notwithstanding all this activity of his mind, is an animal in the full extent of that designation. When the body sickens, the mind droops; and when the blood ceases to flow, the soul takes its departure. Charged with the care of his preservation, admonished by a sense of pleasure or pain, and guarded by an instinctive fear of death, nature has not intrusted his safety to the mere vigilance of his understanding, nor to the government of his uncertain reflections.

The distinction betwixt mind and body is followed by consequences of the greatest importance; but the facts to which we now refer are not

¹ Plutarch in Vit. Pyrrh.

founded on any tenets whatever. They are equally true, whether we admit or reject the distinction in question, or whether we suppose that this living agent is formed of one, or is an assemblage of separate natures. And the materialist, by treating of man as of an engine, cannot make any change in the state of his history. He is a being who, by a multiplicity of visible organs, performs a variety of functions. He bends his joints, contracts or relaxes his muscles in our sight. He continues the beating of the heart in his breast, and the flowing of the blood to every part of his frame. He performs other operations which we cannot refer to any corporeal organ. He perceives, he recollects, and forecasts; he desires, and he shuns; he admires, and contemns. He enjoys his pleasures, or he endures his pains. All these different functions, in some measure, go well or ill together. When the motion of the blood is languid, the muscles relax, the understanding is tardy, and the fancy is dull : when distemper assails him, the physician must attend no less to what he thinks than to what he eats, and examine the returns of his passion together with the strokes of his pulse.

With all his sagacity, his precautions, and his instincts which are given to preserve his being, he partakes in the fate of other animals, and seems to be formed only that he may die. Myriads perish before they reach the perfection of their kind ; and the individual, with an option to owe the prolongation of his temporary course to resolution and conduct, or to abject fear, frequently chooses the

latter, and, by a habit of timidity, embitters the life he is so intent to preserve.

Man, however, at times exempted from this mortifying lot, seems to act without any regard to the length of his period. When he thinks intensely, or desires with ardour, pleasures and pains from any other quarter assail him in vain. Even in his dying hour the muscles acquire a tone from his spirit, and the mind seems to depart in its vigour, and in the midst of a struggle, to obtain the recent aim of its toils. Muley Moluck, borne on his litter and spent with disease, still fought the battle in the midst of which he expired; and the last effort he made, with a finger on his lips, was a signal to conceal his death¹: the precaution, perhaps, of all which he had hitherto taken, the most necessary to prevent a defeat.

Mankind in general have courted occasions to display their courage, and frequently, in search of admiration, have presented a spectacle which to those who have ceased to regard fortitude on its own account becomes a subject of horror. Scevola held his arm in the fire to shake the soul of Porsenna. The savage inures his body to the torture, that in the hour of trial he may exult over his enemy. Even the Mussulman tears his flesh to win the heart of his mistress, and comes in gaiety streaming with blood to shew that he deserves her esteem².

¹ Vertot's Revolutions of Portugal.

² Letters of the right honourable Lady M—y—W—M—e.

Some nations carry the practice of inflicting or of sporting with pain to a degree that is either cruel or absurd; others regard every prospect of bodily suffering as the greatest of evils; and in the midst of their troubles imbitter every real affliction with the terrors of a feeble and dejected imagination. We are not bound to answer for the follies of either; nor, in treating a question which relates to the nature of man, make an estimate of its strength or its weakness from the habits or apprehensions peculiar to any nation or age.

Whoever has compared together the different conditions and manners of men under varieties of education or fortune will be satisfied that mere situation does not constitute their happiness or misery; nor a diversity of external observances imply any opposition of sentiment on the subject of morality. They express their kindness and their enmity in different actions; but kindness or enmity is still the principal article of consideration in human life. They engage in different pursuits, or acquiesce in different conditions but act from passions nearly the same. There is no precise measure of accommodation required to suit their convenience, nor any degree of danger or safety under which they are peculiarly fitted to act. Courage and generosity, fear and envy, are not peculiar to any station or order of men; nor is there any condition in which some of the human race have not shewn that it is possible to employ with propriety the talents and virtues of their species.

What, then, is that mysterious thing called *Happiness* which may have place in such a variety of stations, and to which circumstances, in one age or nation thought necessary, are in another held to be destructive or of no effect? It is not the succession of mere animal pleasures, which, apart from the occupation or the company in which they engage us, can fill up but a few moments in human life. On too frequent a repetition those pleasures turn to satiety and disgust; they tear the constitution to which they are applied in excess, and, like the lightning of night, only serve to darken the gloom through which they occasionally break. Happiness is not that state of repose, or that imaginary freedom from care which at a distance is so frequent an object of desire, but with its approach brings a tedium or a languor more unsupportable than pain itself. If the preceding observations on this subject be just, it arises more from the pursuit than from the attainment of any end whatever; and in every new situation to which we arrive, even in the course of a prosperous life, it depends more on the degree in which our minds are properly employed than it does on the circumstances in which we are destined to act; on the materials which are placed in our hands, or the tools with which we are furnished.

If this be confessed in respect to that class of pursuits which are distinguished by the name of *amusement*, and which, in the case of men who are commonly deemed the most happy, occupy the

greater part of human life, we may apprehend that it holds, much more than is commonly suspected, in many cases of business where the end to be gained, and not the occupation, is supposed to have the principal value.

The miser himself, we are told, can sometimes consider the care of his wealth as a pastime, and has challenged his heir to have more pleasure in spending than he in amassing his fortune. With this degree of indifference to what may be the conduct of others; with this confinement of his care to what he has chosen as his own province, more especially if he has conquered in himself the passions of jealousy and envy which tear the covetous mind; why may not the man whose object is money be understood to lead a life of amusement and pleasure, not only more entire than that of the spendthrift, but even as much as the virtuoso, the scholar, the man of taste, or any of that class of persons who have found out a method of passing their leisure without offence, and to whom the acquisitions made, or the works produced, in their several ways, perhaps are as useless as the bag to the miser, or the counter to those who play from mere dissipation at any game of skill or of chance?

We are soon tired of diversions that do not approach to the nature of business; that is, that do not engage some passion, or give an exercise proportioned to our talents and our faculties. The chace and the gaming-table have each their dangers and difficulties to excite and employ the mind. All games of contention animate our

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emulation, and give a species of party-zeal. The mathematician is only to be amused with intricate problems, the lawyer and the casuist with cases that try their subtilty, and occupy their judgment.

The desire of active engagements, like every other natural appetite, may be carried to excess, and men may debauch in amusements, as well as in the use of wine, or other intoxicating liquors. At first a trifling stake and the occupation of a moderate passion may have served to amuse the gamester; but when the drug becomes familiar, it fails to produce its effect: the play is made deep, and the interest increased to awaken his attention; he is carried on by degrees, and in the end comes to seek for amusement, and to find it only in those passions of anxiety, hope, and despair, which are roused by the hazard into which he has thrown the whole of his fortune.

If men can thus turn their amusements into a scene more serious and interesting than that of business itself, it will be difficult to assign a reason why business and many of the occupations of human life, independent of any distant consequences or future events, may not be chosen as an amusement and adopted on account of the pastime they bring. This is, perhaps, the foundation on which, without the aid of reflection, the contented and the cheerful have rested the gaiety of their tempers. It is, perhaps, the most solid basis of fortitude which any reflection can lay; and happiness itself is secured by making a certain species of conduct our amusement; and,

by considering life in the general estimate of its value, as well as on every particular occasion, as a mere scene for the exercise of the mind, and the engagements of the heart. “I will try and attempt every thing,” says Brutus; “I will never cease to recall my country from this state of servility. If the event be favourable, it will prove matter of joy to us all; if not, yet I, notwithstanding, shall rejoice.” Why rejoice in a disappointment? Why not be dejected when his country was overwhelmed? Because sorrow, perhaps, and dejection can do no good. Nay—but they must be endured when they come. And whence should they come to me? might the Roman say; I have followed my mind, and can follow it still. Events may have changed the situation in which I am destined to act; but can they hinder my acting the part of a man? Shew me a situation in which a man can neither act nor die, and I will own he is wretched.

Whoever has the force of mind steadily to view human life under this aspect has only to choose well his occupations in order to command that state of enjoyment, and freedom of soul, which probably constitute the peculiar felicity to which his active nature is destined.

The dispositions of men, and consequently their occupations, are commonly divided into two principal classes; the selfish and the social. The first are indulged in solitude; and if they carry a reference to mankind, it is that of emulation, competition, and enmity: the second incline us to

live with our fellow-creatures and to do them good; they tend to unite the members of society together; they terminate in a mutual participation of their cares and enjoyments, and render the presence of men an occasion of joy. Under this class may be enumerated the passion of the sexes, the affections of parents and children, general humanity, or singular attachments; above all, that habit of the soul by which we consider ourselves as but a part of some beloved community, and as but individual members of some society whose general welfare is to us the supreme object of zeal, and the great rule of our conduct. This affection is a principle of candour which knows no partial distinctions and is confined to no bounds: it may extend its effects beyond our personal acquaintance; it may, in the mind and in thought at least, make us feel a relation to the universe, and to the whole creation of God. "Shall any one," says Antoninus, "love the city of Cecrops, and you not love the city of God?"

No emotion of the heart is indifferent. It is either an act of vivacity and joy, or a feeling of sadness; a transport of pleasure, or a convulsion of anguish: and the exercises of our different dispositions, as well as their gratifications, are likely to prove matter of the greatest importance to our happiness or misery.

The individual is charged with the care of his animal preservation. He may exist in solitude, and, far removed from society, perform many functions of sense, imagination, and reason. He

is even rewarded for the proper discharge of those functions; and all the natural exercises which relate to himself, as well as to his fellow-creatures, not only occupy without distressing him, but, in many instances, are attended with positive pleasures, and fill up the hours of life with agreeable occupation.

There is a degree, however, in which we suppose that the care of ourselves becomes a source of painful anxiety and cruel passions; in which it degenerates into avarice, vanity, or pride; and in which, by fostering habits of jealousy and envy, of fear and malice, it becomes as destructive of our own enjoyments as it is hostile to the welfare of mankind. This evil, however, is not to be charged upon any excess in the care of ourselves, but upon a mere mistake in the choice of our objects. We look abroad for a happiness which is to be found only in the qualities of the heart: we think ourselves dependent on accidents, and are therefore kept in suspense and solicitude: we think ourselves dependent on the will of other men, and are therefore servile and timid: we think our felicity is placed in subjects for which our fellow-creatures are rivals and competitors; and in pursuit of happiness we engage in those scenes of emulation, envy, hatred, animosity, and revenge that lead to the highest pitch of distress. We act, in short, as if to preserve ourselves were to retain our weakness and perpetuate our sufferings. We charge the ills of a distempered imagination and a corrupt heart

to the account of our fellow-creatures, to whom we refer the pangs of our disappointment or malice; and, while we foster our misery, are surprised that the care of ourselves is attended with no better effects. But he who remembers that he is by nature a rational being and a member of society, that to preserve himself is to preserve his reason, and to preserve the best feelings of his heart, will encounter with none of these inconveniencies, and in the care of himself will find subjects only of satisfaction and triumph.

The division of our appetites into benevolent and selfish has probably, in some degree, helped to mislead our apprehension on the subject of personal enjoyment and private good; and our zeal to prove that virtue is disinterested has not greatly promoted its cause. The gratification of a selfish desire, it is thought, brings advantage or pleasure to ourselves; that of benevolence terminates in the pleasure or advantage of others: whereas, in reality, the gratification of every desire is a personal enjoyment; and its value being proportioned to the particular quality or force of the sentiment, it may happen that the same person may reap a greater advantage from the good fortune he has procured to another than from that he has obtained for himself.

While the gratifications of benevolence, therefore, are as much our own as those of any other desire whatever, the mere exercises of this disposition are, on many accounts, to be considered as the first and the principal constituents of human

happiness. Every act of kindness or of care in the parent to his child ; every emotion of the heart, in friendship or in love, in public zeal, or general humanity, are so many acts of enjoyment and satisfaction. Pity itself and compassion, even grief and melancholy, when grafted on some tender affection, partake of the nature of the stock ; and if they are not positive pleasures, are at least pains of a peculiar nature, which we do not even wish to exchange but for a very real enjoyment obtained in relieving our object. Even extremes in this class of our dispositions, as they are the reverse of hatred, envy, and malice, so they are never attended with those excruciating anxieties, jealousies, and fears which tear the interested mind ; or if, in reality, any ill passion arise from a pretended attachment to our fellow-creatures, that attachment may be safely condemned as not genuine. If we be distrustful or jealous, our pretended affection is probably no more than a desire of attention and personal consideration, a motive which frequently inclines us to be connected with our fellow-creatures, but to which we are as frequently willing to sacrifice their happiness. We consider them as the tools of our vanity, pleasure, or interest, not as the parties on whom we may bestow the effects of our good-will and our love.

A mind devoted to this class of its affections, being occupied with an object that may engage it habitually, is not reduced to court the amusements or pleasures with which persons of an ill temper are obliged to repair their disgusts : and

temperance becomes an easy task when gratifications of sense are supplanted by those of the heart. Courage too is most easily assumed, or is rather inseparable from that ardour of the mind, in society, friendship, or in public action, which makes us forget subjects of personal anxiety or fear, and attend chiefly to the object of our zeal or affection, not to the trifling inconveniencies, dangers, or hardships, which we ourselves may encounter in striving to maintain it.

It should seem, therefore, to be the happiness of man to make his social dispositions the ruling spring of his occupations; to state himself as the member of a community for whose general good his heart may glow with an ardent zeal to the suppression of those personal cares which are the foundation of painful anxieties, fear, jealousy, and envy; or, as Mr. Pope expresses the same sentiment,

“ Man, like the gen’rous vine, supported lives :

“ The strength he gains is from th’ embrace he gives ’.”

We commonly apprehend that it is our duty to do kindnesses, and our happiness to receive them : but if, in reality, courage and a heart devoted to the good of mankind are the constituents of human felicity, the kindness which is done infers a happiness in the person from whom it proceeds, not in him on whom it is bestowed ;

* The same maxim will apply throughout every part of nature. *To love is to enjoy pleasure : To hate is to be in pain.*

and the greatest good which men, possessed of fortitude and generosity, can procure to their fellow-creatures, is a participation of this happy character.

If this be the good of the individual, it is likewise that of mankind; and virtue no longer imposes a task by which we are obliged to bestow upon others that good from which we ourselves refrain; but supposes, in the highest degree, as possessed by ourselves, that state of felicity which we are required to promote in the world. “You will confer the greatest benefit on your city,” says Epictetus, “not by raising the roofs, but by exalting the souls of your fellow-citizens; for it is better that great souls should live in small habitations than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses¹.”

To the benevolent the satisfaction of others is a ground of enjoyment; and existence itself, in a world that is governed by the wisdom of God, is a blessing. The mind, freed from cares that lead to pusillanimity and meanness, becomes calm, active, fearless, and bold; capable of every enterprise, and vigorous in the exercise of every talent by which the nature of man is adorned. On this foundation was raised the admirable character, which, during a certain period of their story, distinguished the celebrated nations of antiquity, and rendered familiar and ordinary in their manners examples of magnanimity, which, under governments less favourable to the public

¹ Mrs. Carter's translation of the works of Epictetus.

affections, rarely occur; or which, without being much practised, or even understood, are made subjects of admiration and swelling panegyric. "Thus," says Xenophon, "died Thrasybulus, who indeed appears to have been a good man." What valuable praise, and how significant to those who know the story of this admirable person! The members of those illustrious states, from the habit of considering themselves as part of a community, or at least as deeply involved with some order of men in the state, were regardless of personal considerations; they had perpetual view to objects which excite a great ardour in the soul, which led them to act perpetually in the view of their fellow-citizens, and to practise those arts of deliberation, elocution, policy, and war, on which the fortunes of nations or of men, in their collective body, depend. To the force of mind collected in this career, and to the improvements of wit which were made in pursuing it, these nations owed not only their magnanimity, and the superiority of their political and military conduct, but even the arts of poetry and literature, which among them were only the inferior appendages of a genius otherwise excited, cultivated, and refined.

To the ancient Greek, or the Roman, the individual was nothing, and the public every thing. To the modern, in too many nations of Europe, the individual is every thing, and the public nothing. The state is merely a combination of departments in which consideration, wealth,

eminence, or power, are offered as the reward of service. It was the nature of modern government, even in its first institution, to bestow on every individual a fixed station and dignity which he was to maintain for himself. Our ancestors, in rude ages, during the recess of wars from abroad, fought for their personal claims at home, and, by their competitions and the balance of their powers, maintained a kind of political freedom in the state, while private parties were subject to continual wrongs and oppressions. Their posterity, in times more polished, have repressed the civil disorders in which the activity of earlier ages chiefly consisted; but they employ the calm they have gained, not in fostering a zeal for those laws and that constitution of government to which they owe their protection, but in practising apart, and each for himself, the several arts of personal advancement or profit, which their political establishments may enable them to pursue with success. Commerce, which may be supposed to comprehend every lucrative art, is accordingly considered as the great object of nations, and the principal study of mankind.

So much are we accustomed to consider personal fortune as the sole object of care that, even under popular establishments, and in states where different orders of men are summoned to partake in the government of their country, and where the liberties they enjoy cannot be long preserved without vigilance and activity on the part of the subject, still they who, in the vulgar

phrase, have not their fortunes to make, are supposed to be at a loss for occupation, and betake themselves to solitary pastimes, or cultivate what they are pleased to call a taste for gardening, building, drawing, or music. With this aid they endeavour to fill up the blanks of a listless life, and avoid the necessity of curing their languors by any positive service to their country or to mankind.

The weak or the malicious are well employed in any thing that is innocent, and are fortunate in finding any occupation which prevents the effects of a temper that would prey upon themselves or upon their fellow-creatures. But they who are blessed with a happy disposition, with capacity and vigour, incur a real debauchery by having any amusement that occupies an improper share of their time; and are really cheated of their happiness in being made to believe that any occupation or pastime is better fitted to amuse themselves than that which at the same time produces some real good to their fellow-creatures.

This sort of entertainment, indeed, cannot be the choice of the mercenary, the envious, or the malicious. Its value is known only to persons of an opposite temper, and to their experience alone we appeal. Guided by mere disposition, and without the aid of reflection, in business, in friendship, and in public life, they often acquit themselves well; and borne with satisfaction on the tide of their emotions and sentiments, enjoy the present hour, without recollection of the past, or hopes

of the future. It is in speculation, not in practice, they are made to discover that virtue is a task of severity and self-denial.

OF NATIONAL FELICITY.

MAN is, by nature, the member of a community; and when considered in this capacity, the individual appears to be no longer made for himself. He must forego his happiness and his freedom where these interfere with the good of society. He is only part of a whole, and the praise we think due to his virtue is but a branch of that more general commendation we bestow on the member of a body, on the part of a fabric or engine, for being well fitted to occupy its place, and to produce its effect.

If this follow from the relation of a part to its whole, and if the public good be the principal object with individuals, it is likewise true that the happiness of individuals is the great end of civil society; for in what sense can a public enjoy any good if its members, considered apart, be unhappy?

The interests of society, however, and of its members, are easily reconciled. If the individual owe every degree of consideration to the public, he receives, in paying that very consideration, the greatest happiness of which his nature is capable; and the greatest blessing the public can bestow on its members is to keep them attached

to itself. That is the most happy state which is most beloved by its subjects; and they are the most happy men whose hearts are engaged to a community in which they find every object of generosity and zeal, and a scope to the exercise of every talent and of every virtuous disposition.

After we have thus found general maxims, the greater part of our trouble remains, their just application to particular cases. Nations are different in respect to their extent, numbers of people, and wealth; in respect to the arts they practise, and the accommodations they have procured. These circumstances may not only affect the manners of men; they even, in our esteem, come into competition with the article of manners itself; are supposed to constitute a national felicity independent of virtue; and give a title upon which we indulge our own vanity and that of other nations, as we do that of private men, on the score of their fortunes and honours.

But if this way of measuring happiness, when applied to private men, be ruinous and false, it is so no less when applied to nations. Wealth, commerce, extent of territory, and the knowledge of arts are, when properly employed, the means of preservation, and the foundations of power. If they fail in part, the nation is weakened; if they were entirely withheld, the race would perish. Their tendency is to maintain numbers of men, but not to constitute happiness. They will accordingly maintain the wretched as well as the happy. They answer one purpose, but are not therefore sufficient

for all, and are of little significance when only employed to maintain a timid, dejected, and servile people.

Great and powerful states are able to overcome and subdue the weak ; polished and commercial nations have more wealth, and practise a greater variety of arts than the rude ; but the happiness of men, in all cases alike, consists in the blessings of a candid, an active, and strenuous mind : and if we consider the state of society merely as that into which mankind are led by their propensities, as a state to be valued from its effect in preserving the species, in ripening their talents, and exciting their virtues, we need not enlarge our communities in order to enjoy these advantages. We frequently obtain them in the most remarkable degree where nations remain independent, and are of a small extent.

To increase the numbers of mankind may be admitted as a great and important object ; but to extend the limits of any particular state is not, perhaps, the way to obtain it ; while we desire that our fellow-creatures should multiply, it does not follow that the whole should, if possible, be united under one head. We are apt to admire the empire of the Romans as a model of national greatness and splendour ; but the greatness we admire in this case was ruinous to the virtue and the happiness of mankind ; it was found to be inconsistent with all the advantages which that conquering people had formerly enjoyed in the articles of government and manners.

The emulation of nations proceeds from their division. A cluster of states, like a company of men, find the exercise of their reason, and the test of their virtues, in the affairs they transact upon a footing of equality and of separate interest. The measures taken for safety, including great part of the national policy, are relative in every state to what is apprehended from abroad. Athens was necessary to Sparta in the exercise of her virtue as steel is to flint in the production of fire; and, if the cities of Greece had been united under one head, we should never have heard of Epaminondas or Thrasybulus, of Lycurgus or Solon.

When we reason in behalf of our species, therefore, although we may lament the abuses which sometimes arise from independence and opposition of interest, yet, whilst any degrees of virtue remain with mankind, we cannot wish to crowd under one establishment numbers of men who may serve to constitute several, or to commit affairs to the conduct of one senate, one legislative or executive power, which, upon a distinct and separate footing, might furnish an exercise of ability and a theatre of glory to many.

This may be a subject upon which no determinate rule can be given; but the admiration of boundless dominion is a ruinous error; and in no instance, perhaps, is the real interest of mankind more entirely mistaken.

The measure of enlargement to be wished for in any particular state is often to be taken from

the condition of its neighbours. Where a number of states are contiguous, they should be near an equality in order that they may be mutually objects of respect and consideration, and in order that they may possess that independence in which the political life of a nation consists.

When the kingdoms of Spain were united, when the great fiefs in France were annexed to the crown, it was no longer expedient for the nations of Great Britain to continue disjoined.

The small republics of Greece, indeed, by their subdivisions and the balance of their power, found almost in every village the object of nations. Every little district was a nursery of excellent men, and what is now the wretched corner of a great empire was the field on which mankind have reaped their principal honours. But in modern Europe, republics of a similar extent are like shrubs under the shade of a taller wood choked by the neighbourhood of more powerful states. In their case, a certain disproportion of force frustrates, in a great measure, the advantage of separation. They are like the trader in Poland who is the more despicable, and the less secure, that he is neither master nor slave.

Independent communities, in the mean time, however weak, are averse to a coalition, not only where it comes with an air of imposition or unequal treaty, but even where it implies no more than the admission of new members to an equal share of consideration with the old. The citizen has no interest in the annexation of kingdoms; he

must find his importance diminished as the state is enlarged : but ambitious men, under the enlargement of territory, find a more plentiful harvest of power and of wealth, while government itself is an easier task. Hence the ruinous progress of empire; and hence free nations, under the shew of acquiring dominion, suffer themselves, in the end, to be yoked with the slaves they had conquered.

Our desire to augment the force of a nation is the only pretext for enlarging its territory; but this measure, when pursued to extremes, seldom fails to frustrate itself.

Notwithstanding the advantage of numbers and superior resources in war, the strength of a nation is derived from the character, not from the wealth, nor from the multitude of its people. If the treasure of a state can hire numbers of men, erect ramparts, and furnish the implements of war, the possessions of the fearful are easily seized; a timorous multitude falls into rout of itself; ramparts may be scaled where they are not defended by valour; and arms are of consequence only in the hands of the brave. The band to which Agesilaus pointed as the wall of his city made a defence for their country more permanent, and more effectual, than the rock and the cement with which other cities were fortified.

We should owe little to that statesman who were to contrive a defence that might supersede the external uses of virtue. It is wisely ordered for man, as a rational being, that the employment

of reason is necessary to his preservation; it is fortunate for him, in the pursuit of distinction, that his personal consideration depends on his character; and it is fortunate for nations that, in order to be powerful and safe, they must strive to maintain the courage and cultivate the virtues of their people. By the use of such means they at once gain their external ends, and are happy.

Peace and unanimity are commonly considered as the principal foundations of public felicity; yet the rivalship of separate communities, and the agitations of a free people, are the principles of political life, and the school of men. How shall we reconcile these jarring and opposite tenets? It is, perhaps, not necessary to reconcile them. The pacific may do what they can to allay the animosities, and to reconcile the opinions of men; and it will be happy if they can succeed in repressing their crimes, and in calming the worst of their passions. Nothing, in the mean time, but corruption or slavery can suppress the debates that subsist among men of integrity who bear an equal part in the administration of state.

A perfect agreement in matters of opinion is not to be obtained in the most select company; and if it were, what would become of society? "The Spartan legislator," says Plutarch, "appears to have sown the seeds of variance and dissension among his countrymen: he meant that good citizens should be led to dispute; he considered emulation as the brand by which their virtues were kindled, and seemed to apprehend

“that a complaisance, by which men submit their
“opinions without examination, is a principal
“source of corruption.”

Forms of government are supposed to decide of the happiness or misery of mankind; but forms of government must be varied in order to suit the extent, the way of subsistence, the character, and the manners of different nations. In some cases the multitude may be suffered to govern themselves; in others they must be severely restrained. The inhabitants of a village, in some primitive age, may have been safely intrusted to the conduct of reason and to the suggestion of their innocent views; but the tenants of Newgate can scarcely be trusted with chains locked to their bodies, and bars of iron fixed to their legs. How is it possible, therefore, to find any single form of government that would suit mankind in every condition!

It is a common observation that mankind were originally equal. They have indeed by nature equal rights to their preservation and to the use of their talents, but they are fitted for different stations; and when they are classed by a rule taken from this circumstance, they suffer no injustice on the side of their natural rights. It is obvious that some mode of subordination is as necessary to men as society itself; and this, not only to attain the ends of government, but to comply with an order established by nature.

Prior to any political institution whatever men are qualified by a great diversity of talents,

by a different tone of the soul and ardour of the passions, to act a variety of parts. Bring them together, each will find his place. They censure or applaud in a body; they consult and deliberate in more select parties; they take or give an ascendant as individuals; and numbers are by these means fitted to act in company, and to preserve their communities before any formal distribution of office is made.

We are formed to act in this manner; and, if we have any doubts with relation to the rights of government in general, we owe our perplexity more to the subtilties of the speculative than to any uncertainty in the feelings of the heart. Involved in the resolutions of our company we move with the crowd before we have determined the rule by which its will is collected. We follow a leader before we have settled the ground of his pretensions, or adjusted the form of his election: and it is not till after mankind have committed many errors in the capacities of magistrate and subject that they think of making government itself a subject of rules.

If, therefore, in considering the variety of forms under which societies subsist, the casuist is pleased to inquire, what title one man, or any number of men, have to controul his actions? he may be answered: none at all, provided that his actions have no effect to the prejudice of his fellow-creatures; but if they have, the rights of defence, and the obligation to repress the commission of wrongs, belong to collective bodies as well as to

individuals. Many rude nations, having no formal tribunals for the judgment of crimes, assemble when alarmed by any flagrant offence, and take their measures with the criminal as they would with an enemy.

But will this consideration which confirms the title to sovereignty, where it is exercised by the society in its collective capacity, or by those to whom the powers of the whole are committed, likewise support the claim to dominion, wherever it is casually lodged, or even where it is only maintained by force?

This question may be sufficiently answered by observing that a right to do justice, and to do good, is competent to every individual or order of men, and that the exercise of this right has no limits but in the defect of power. Whoever, therefore, has power may employ it to this extent, and no previous convention is required to justify his conduct. But a right to do wrong, or to commit injustice, is an abuse of language, and a contradiction in terms. It is no more competent to the collective body of a people than it is to any single usurper. When we admit such a prerogative in the case of any sovereign, we can only mean to express the extent of his power, and the force with which he is enabled to execute his pleasure. Such a prerogative is assumed by the leader of banditti at the head of his gang, or by a despotic prince at the head of his troops. When the sword is presented by either, the traveller or the inhabitant may submit from a sense of necessity

or fear, but he lies under no obligation from a motive of duty or justice.

The multiplicity of forms, in the mean time, which different societies offer to our view, is almost infinite. The classes into which they distribute their members, the manner in which they establish the legislative and executive powers, the imperceptible circumstances by which they are led to have different customs, and to confer on their governors unequal measures of power and authority, give rise to perpetual distinctions between constitutions the most nearly resembling each other, and give to human affairs a variety in detail which, in its full extent, no understanding can comprehend, and no memory retain.

In order to have a general and comprehensive knowledge of the whole, we must be determined on this, as on every other subject, to overlook many particulars and singularities distinguishing different governments; to fix our attention on certain points in which many agree; and thereby establish a few general heads under which the subject may be distinctly considered. When we have marked the characteristics which form the general points of co-incidence; when we have pursued them to their consequences in the several modes of legislation, execution, and judicature, in the establishments which relate to police, commerce, religion, or domestic life, we have made an acquisition of knowledge which, though it does not supersede the necessity of experience, may serve to direct our inquiries, and, in the midst of

affairs, give an order and a method for the arrangement of particulars that occur to our observation.

When I recollect what the President Montesquieu has written, I am at a loss to tell, why I should treat of human affairs : but I too am instigated by my reflections and my sentiments ; and I may utter them more to the comprehension of ordinary capacities because I am more on the level of ordinary men. If it be necessary to pave the way for what follows on the general history of nations, by giving some account of the heads under which various forms of government may be conveniently ranged, the reader should perhaps be referred to what has been already delivered on the subject by this profound politician and amiable moralist. In his writings will be found not only the original of what I am now, for the sake of order, to copy from him, but likewise probably the source of many observations which I may, under the belief of invention, have repeated without quoting their author.

The ancient philosophers treated of government commonly under three heads, the Democratic, the Aristocratic, and the Despotic. Their attention was chiefly occupied with the varieties of republican government, and they paid little regard to a very important distinction, which Mr. Montesquieu has made, between Despotism and Monarchy. He too has considered government as reducible to three general forms ; and, “ to understand the nature of each,” he observes, “ it is

“ sufficient to recal ideas which are familiar with
“ men of the least reflection, who admit three
“ definitions, or rather three facts : that a re-
“ public is a state in which the people in a col-
“ lective body, or a part of the people, possess
“ the sovereign power : that monarchy is that
“ in which one man governs according to fixed
“ and determinate laws : and a despotism is that
“ in which one man, without law, or rule of
“ administration, by the mere impulse of will or
“ caprice, decides, and carries every thing before
“ him.”

Republics admit of a very material distinction, which is pointed out in the general definition, that between democracy and aristocracy. In the first, supreme power remains in the hands of the collective body. Every office of magistracy, at the nomination of this sovereign, is open to every citizen who, in the discharge of his duty, becomes the minister of the people, and accountable to them for every object of his trust.

In the second, the sovereignty is lodged in a particular class or order of men who, being once named, continue for life, or by the hereditary distinctions of birth and fortune are advanced to a station of permanent superiority. From this order, and by their nomination, all the offices of magistracy are filled; and in the different assemblies which they constitute, whatever relates to the legislation, the execution, or jurisdiction, is finally determined.

Mr. Montesquieu has pointed out the sentiment

or maxims from which men must be supposed to act under these different governments.

In democracy, they must love equality; they must respect the rights of their fellow-citizens; they must unite by the common ties of affection to the state. In forming personal pretensions, they must be satisfied with that degree of consideration they can procure by their abilities fairly measured with those of an opponent; they must labour for the public without hope of profit; they must reject every attempt to create a personal dependence. Candour, force, and elevation of mind, in short, are the props of democracy, and virtue is the principle of conduct required to its preservation.

How beautiful a pre-eminence on the side of popular government! and how ardently should mankind wish for the form if it tended to establish the principle, or were in every instance a sure indication of its presence!

But perhaps we must have possessed the principle, in order, with any hopes of advantage, to receive the form; and where the first is entirely extinguished, the other may be fraught with evil, if any additional evil deserves to be shunned where men are already unhappy.

At Constantinople or Algiers it is a miserable spectacle when men pretend to act on a footing of equality: they only mean to shake off the restraints of government, and to seize as much as they can of that spoil which, in ordinary times, is ingrossed by the master they serve.

It is one advantage of democracy that, the principal ground of distinction being personal qualities, men are classed according to their abilities and the merit of their actions : though all have equal pretensions to power, yet the state is actually governed by a few. The majority of the people, even in their capacity of sovereign, only pretend to employ their senses; to feel when pressed by national inconveniencies, or threatened by public dangers; and with the ardour which is apt to arise in crowded assemblies to urge the pursuits in which they are engaged, or to repel the attacks with which they are menaced.

The most perfect equality of rights can never exclude the ascendant of superior minds, nor the assemblies of a collective body govern without the direction of select councils. On this account popular government may be confounded with aristocracy. But this alone does not constitute the character of aristocratical government. Here the members of the state are divided at least into two classes of which one is destined to command, the other to obey. No merits or defects can raise or sink a person from one class to the other. The only effect of personal character is to procure to the individual a suitable degree of consideration with his own order, not to vary his rank. In one situation he is taught to assume, in another to yield the preeminence. He occupies the station of patron or client, and is either the sovereign or the subject of his country. The whole citizens may unite in executing the plans of state, but

never in deliberating on its measures, or enacting its laws. What belongs to the whole people under democracy, is here confined to a part. Members of the superior order are among themselves, possibly, classed according to their abilities, but retain a perpetual ascendant over those of inferior station. They are at once the servants and the masters of the state, and pay with their personal attendance and with their blood for the civil or military honours they enjoy.

To maintain for himself, and to admit in his fellow-citizen, a perfect equality of privilege and station is no longer the leading maxim of the member of such a community. The rights of men are modified by their condition. One order claims more than it is willing to yield; the other must be ready to yield what it does not assume to itself: and it is with good reason that Mr. Montesquieu gives to the principle of such governments the name of *moderation*, not of *virtue*.

The elevation of one class is a moderated arrogance; the submission of the other a limited deference. The first must be careful, by concealing the invidious part of their distinction, to palliate what is grievous in the public arrangement, and by their education, their cultivated manners, and improved talents, to appear qualified for the stations they occupy. The other must be taught to yield from respect and personal attachment what could not otherwise be extorted by force. When this moderation fails on either side, the constitution totters. A populace enraged to mutiny may

claim the right of equality to which they are admitted in democratical states ; or a nobility bent on dominion may choose among themselves, or find already pointed out to them a sovereign who, by advantages of fortune, popularity, or abilities, is ready to seize for his own family that envied power which has already carried his order beyond the limits of moderation, and infected particular men with a boundless ambition.

Monarchies have accordingly been found with the recent marks of aristocracy. There, however, the monarch is only the first among the nobles ; he must be satisfied with a limited power ; his subjects are ranged into classes ; he finds in every quarter a pretence to privilege that circumscribes his authority ; and he finds a force sufficient to confine his administration within certain bounds of equity and determinate laws.

Under such governments, however, the love of equality is preposterous, and moderation itself is unnecessary. The object of every rank is precedence, and every order may display its advantages to their full extent. The sovereign himself owes great part of his authority to the sounding titles and the dazzling equipage which he exhibits in public. The subordinate ranks lay claim to importance by a like exhibition, and for that purpose carry in every instant the ensigns of their birth or the ornaments of their fortune. What else could mark out to the individual the relation in which he stands to his fellow-subjects, or distinguish the numberless ranks that fill up the

interval between the state of the sovereign and that of the peasant? Or what else could, in states of a great extent, preserve any appearance of order among members disunited by ambition and interest, and destined to form a community without the sense of any common concern?

Monarchies are generally found where the state is enlarged in population and in territory beyond the numbers and dimensions that are consistent with republican government. Together with these circumstances great inequalities arise in the distribution of property; and the desire of pre-eminence becomes the predominant passion. Every rank would exercise its prerogative, and the sovereign is perpetually tempted to enlarge his own; if subjects who despair of precedence plead for equality, he is willing to favour their claims and to aid them in reducing pretensions with which he himself is, on many occasions, obliged to contend. In the event of such a policy many invidious distinctions and grievances peculiar to monarchical government may, in appearance, be removed; but the state of equality to which the subjects approach is that of slaves equally dependent on the will of a master, not that of freemen in a condition to maintain their own.

The principle of monarchy, according to Montesquieu, is honour. Men may possess good qualities, elevation of mind, and fortitude; but the sense of equality, that will bear no incroachment on the personal rights of the meanest citizen, the indignant spirit that will not court protection, nor

accept as a favour what is due as a right, the public affection which is founded on the neglect of personal considerations, are neither consistent with the preservation of the constitution, nor agreeable to the habits acquired in any station assigned to its members.

Every condition is possessed of peculiar dignity, and points out a propriety of conduct which men of station are obliged to maintain. In the commerce of superiors and inferiors it is the object of ambition, and of vanity, to refine on the advantages of rank; while, to facilitate the intercourse of polite society, it is the aim of good breeding to disguise or reject them.

Though the objects of consideration are rather the dignities of station than personal qualities; though friendship cannot be formed by mere inclination, nor alliances by the mere choice of the heart; yet men so united, and even without changing their order, are highly susceptible of moral excellence, or liable to many different degrees of corruption. They may act a vigorous part as members of the state, an amiable one in the commerce of private society; or they may yield up their dignity as citizens, even while they raise their arrogance and presumption as private parties.

In monarchy all orders of men derive their honours from the crown, but they continue to hold them as a right, and they exercise a subordinate power in the state, founded on the permanent rank they enjoy, and on the attachment of

those whom they are appointed to lead and protect. Though they do not force themselves into national councils and public assemblies, and though the name of senate is unknown, yet the sentiments they adopt must have weight with the sovereign; and every individual, in his separate capacity, in some measure deliberates for his country. In whatever does not derogate from his rank he has an arm ready to serve the community; in whatever alarms his sense of honour he has aversions and dislikes which amount to a negative on the will of his prince.

Intangled together by the reciprocal ties of dependence and protection, though not combined by the sense of a common interest, the subjects of monarchy, like those of republics, find themselves occupied as the members of an active society, and engaged to treat with their fellow-creatures on a liberal footing. If those principles of honour which save the individual from servility in his own person, or from becoming an engine of oppression in the hands of another, should fail; if they should give way to the maxims of commerce, to the refinements of a supposed philosophy, or to the misplaced ardours of a republican spirit; if they are betrayed by the cowardice of subjects, or subdued by the ambition of princes; what must become of the nations of Europe?

Despotism is monarchy corrupted, in which a court and a prince in appearance remain, but in which every subordinate rank is destroyed; in which the subject is told that he has no rights;

that he cannot possess any property, nor fill any station independent of the momentary will of his prince. These doctrines are founded on the maxims of conquest; they must be inculcated with the whip and the sword, and are best received under the terror of chains and imprisonment. Fear, therefore, is the principle which qualifies the subject to occupy his station: and the sovereign, who holds out the ensigns of terror so freely to others, has abundant reason to give this passion a principal place with himself. That tenure which he has devised for the rights of others is soon applied to his own; and from his eager desire to secure or to extend his power, he finds is become, like the fortunes of his people, a creature of mere imagination and unsettled caprice.

Whilst we thus, with so much accuracy, can assign the ideal limits that may distinguish constitutions of government, we find them, in reality, both in respect to the principle and the form, variously blended together. In what society are not men classed by external distinctions as well as personal qualities? In what state are they not actuated by a variety of principles, justice, honour, moderation, and fear? It is the purpose of science not to disguise this confusion in its object; but, in the multiplicity and combination of particulars, to find the principal points which deserve our attention; and which, being well understood, save us from the embarrassment which the varieties of singular cases might otherwise create. In the same

degree in which governments require men to act from principles of virtue, of honour, or of fear, they are more or less fully comprised under the heads of republic, monarchy, or despotism, and the general theory is more or less applicable to their particular cases.

Forms of government, in fact, mutually approach or recede by many, and often insensible, gradations. Democracy, by admitting certain inequalities of rank, approaches to aristocracy. In popular as well as aristocratical governments, particular men, by their personal authority, and sometimes by the credit of their family, have maintained a species of monarchical power. The monarch is limited in different degrees : even the despotic prince is only that monarch whose subjects claim the fewest privileges, or who is himself best prepared to subdue them by force. All these varieties are but steps in the history of mankind, and mark the fleeting and transient situations through which they have passed while supported by virtue, or depressed by vice.

Perfect democracy and despotism appear to be the opposite extremes at which constitutions of government farthest recede from each other. Under the first a perfect virtue is required; under the second a total corruption is supposed : yet in point of mere form, there being nothing fixed in the ranks and distinctions of men beyond the casual and temporary possession of power, societies easily pass from a condition in which every individual has an equal title to reign into one in which they

are equally destined to serve. The same qualities in both, courage, popularity, address, and military conduct, raise the ambitious to eminence. With these qualities the citizen or the slave easily passes from the ranks to the command of an army; from an obscure to an illustrious station. In either, a single person may rule with unlimited sway; and in both, the populace may break down every barrier of order and restraint of law.

If we suppose that the equality established among the subjects of a despotic state has inspired its members with confidence, intrepidity, and the love of justice, the despotic prince, having ceased to be an object of fear, must sink among the crowd. If, on the contrary, the personal equality which is enjoyed by the members of a democratical state should be valued merely as an equal pretension to the objects of avarice and ambition, the monarch may start up anew, and be supported by those who mean to share in his profits. When the rapacious and mercenary assemble in parties, it is of no consequence under what leader they inlist, whether Cæsar or Pompey; the hopes of rapine or pay are the only motives from which they become attached to either.

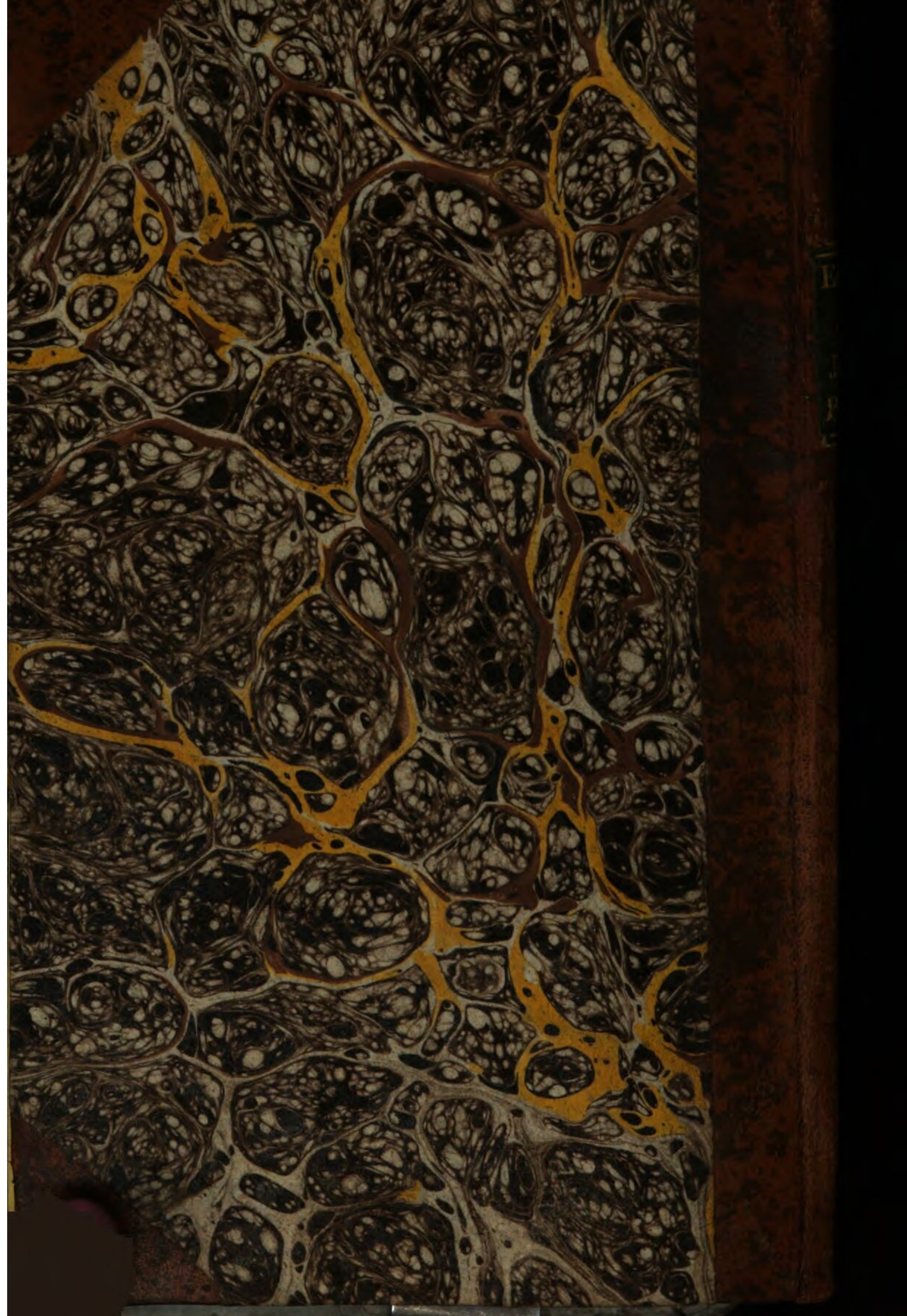
In the disorder of corrupted societies the scene has been frequently changed from democracy to despotism, and from the last too, in its turn, to the first. From amidst the democracy of corrupt men, and from a scene of lawless confusion, the tyrant ascends a throne with arms reeking in blood. But his abuses, or his weaknesses, in the station

he has gained, in their turn awaken and give way to the spirit of mutiny and revenge. The cries of murder and desolation, which in the ordinary course of military government terrified the subject in his private retreat, sound through the vaults, and pierce the grates and iron doors of the seraglio. Democracy seems to revive in a scene of wild disorder and tumult : but both the extremes are but the transient fits of paroxysm or languor in a distempered state.

If men be any where arrived at this measure of depravity, there appears no immediate hope of redress. Neither the ascendancy of the multitude, nor that of the tyrant, will secure the administration of justice : neither the licence of mere tumult, nor the calm of dejection and servitude, will teach the citizen that he was born for candour and affection to his fellow-creatures. And if the speculative would find that habitual state of war, which they are sometimes pleased to honour with the name of *the state of nature*, they will find it in the contests that subsist between the despotical prince and his subjects not in the first approaches of a rude and simple tribe to the condition and the domestic arrangement of nations.

THE END.

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Ferguson, Adam,

Essays on the Intellectual Powers, Moral Sentiment, Happiness and National
Felicity

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